

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1 (currently amended): A method for preparing an absorbent composition comprising:

- providing a first layer of wettable fibers;
- distributing on the first layer of wettable fibers a layer of surface crosslinked polymer having a FVAUL value of at least about 60 cc after 10 minutes;
- providing a second layer of wettable fibers on top of the layer of surface crosslinked polymer; and
- calendaring said layers to form the wettable fibers into a fibrous matrix having the surface crosslinked polymer disbursed therein, said surface crosslinked polymer comprising about 70% by weight to about 95% by weight of the absorbent composition and said wettable fibers comprising about 5% by weight to about 30% by weight of the absorbent composition, wherein said polymer comprises a continuous phase in at least the target region.

Claim 2 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the surface crosslinked polymer is bipolar.

Claim 3 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the surface crosslinked polymer provides minimal gel-blocking properties upon absorption of liquid.

Claim 4 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the surface crosslinked polymer constitutes about 85% by weight to about 95% by weight of the combined weight of the fibrous matrix and the surface crosslinked polymer.

Claim 5 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the surface crosslinked polymer constitutes about 90% by weight to about 95% by weight of the combined weight of the

fibrous matrix and the surface crosslinked polymer.

Claim 6 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein said wettable fibers constitute about 5% by weight to about 15% by weight of the combined weight of the fibrous matrix and the surface crosslinked polymer.

Claim 7 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein said wettable fibers constitute about 5% by weight to about 10% by weight of the combined weight of the fibrous matrix and the surface crosslinked polymer.

Claim 8 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the surface crosslinked polymer comprises a mixed-bed ion-exchange superabsorbent polymer composition.

Claim 9 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the surface crosslinked polymer continues to swell at a substantially constant rate for at least about 0.4 hours after a third dose of urine at a finite volume of urine absorption.

Claim 10 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the surface crosslinked polymer achieves equilibrium swelling levels within about 5 minutes to about 10 minutes after a third dose of urine.

Claim 11 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the surface crosslinked polymer achieves equilibrium swelling levels at an FVAUL value of no less than about 75 cc.

Claim 12 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the FVAUL free volume of the absorbent composition is about 20% to about 70%.

Claim 13 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the FVAUL free volume of the absorbent composition is about 20% to about 60%.

Claim 14 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the FVAUL free volume of the absorbent composition is about 20% to about 50%.

Claim 15 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the FVAUL free volume of the absorbent composition is about 25% to about 50%.

Claim 16 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the surface crosslinked polymer is evenly disbursed within the fibrous matrix.

Claim 17 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the surface crosslinked polymer is poly(acrylic acid).

Claim 18 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the surface crosslinked polymer comprises about 95% by weight of poly(acrylic acid) and about 3% by weight of a crosslinking agent.

Claim 19 (original): The method of claim 18, wherein the crosslinking agent is methylene bisacrylamide.

Claim 20 (original): The method of claim 18, wherein the surface crosslinked polymer additionally comprises a neutralizing agent.

Claim 21 (original): The method of claim 20, wherein the neutralizing agent is triethanol amine.

Claim 22 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the wettable fibers are selected from the group consisting of natural fibers, synthetic fibers, and combinations thereof.

Claim 23 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the wettable fibers are selected from the group consisting of wood pulp (fluff), cotton linters, polyethylene,

polypropylene, polyesters, copolymers of polyesters and polyamides, and combinations thereof.

Claim 24 (original): The method of claim 1, wherein the wettable fibers are selected from the group consisting of wood pulp fibers, meltblown synthetic fibers and combinations thereof.